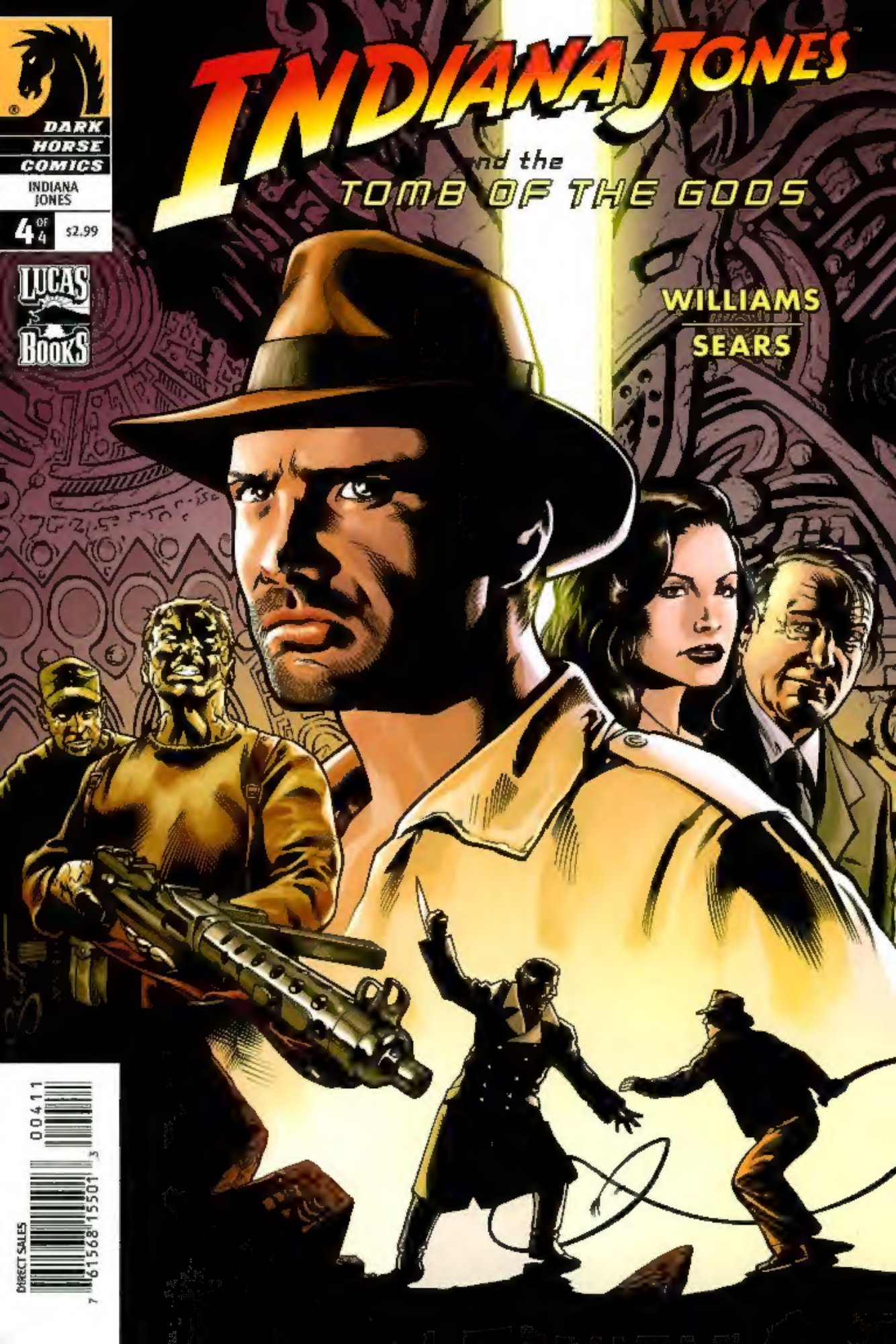
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PATRICK THORPE

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KATIE MOODY

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NORTHERN SIBERIA.
BELOW GROUND.
SHUFFE
SHUFFE
SHUFFE
SHUFFE
NNNNNNNN
AHHHH!
CRRRRRRRUUMMBBLLE
HUH?

AAAAAAAAAAAAHHH!
HUFFF
HUFFF
ICE.
THANK GOD FOR ICE.
SOMEONE UP THERE MUST LIKE ME.
OR MAYBE NOT.
GRRR...

HEY, GUYS.
HE DIDN'T SURVIVE THE FALL. I'M SORRY.
AND NEITHER DID THEY, HUH?
WHAT IS THIS?
ALMOST SEEMS LIKE A ROAD OR A WALKWAY FOR SOMETHING BIG. LEADING UP TO THE SURFACE.
IT'S NOT A NATURAL PHENOMENON.
NO SIGN OF THE OTHERS. AND IF I'M ALIVE, THEY MIGHT BE...
WELL....
I THINK I'M ALIVE.
THERE IS A WHITE LIGHT AHEAD, AND IT'S KIND OF BECKONING ME.
AND IT'S GETTING WARM DOWN HERE.
AND I'M TALKING TO MYSELF.
I NEVER USED TO TALK TO MYSELF.

MMMMTH!
QUIET. WE'RE NOT ALONE.
STHCARED THE HELTH OUTTHA ME.
HERE'S YOUR WEIRDO WHIP. IT CAME DOWN AHEAD OF YOU.
IT IS NOT "WEIRDO."
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU STILL HAVE YOUR REVOLVER?
LOST IT IN THE FALL..
GREAT. WELL, I SUPPOSE YOU CAN STILL KNOCK CIGARETTES OUT OF PEOPLE'S MOUTHS FOR DIMES. THAT'LL BE USEFUL.
THIS PLANT LIFE. I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT. I THINK IT'S WHAT'S GIVING OFF THE HEAT.
IT'S AMAZING.
YOU WANNA SEE AMAZING?
COME TAKE A LOOK AT THIS, PROFESSOR.

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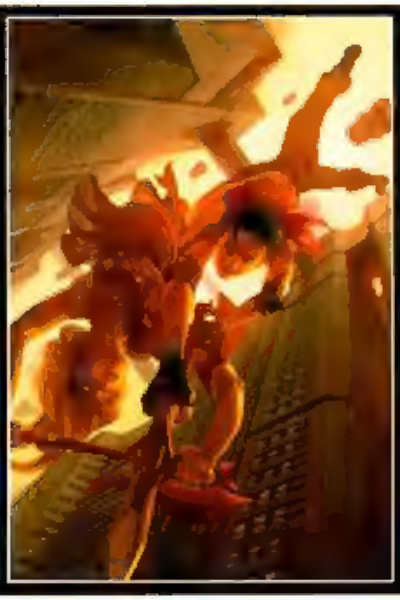

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GREAT. MARCUS AND ALEX ARE ALIVE AND IT LOOKS LIKE THE FALL TOOK CARE OF SOME OF VON HASSELL'S MEN.
I'M GOING TO CLIMB DOWN AND GO AROUND THEM. YOU WAIT A FEW SECONDS AND THEN...
TIME OUT, JONES. TAKE ANOTHER LOOK.
THEY'RE NOT MOVING.
WHY AREN'T THEY MOVING?
NO ONE'S EVEN POINTING GUNS. THEY USUALLY *REALLY* LIKE POINTING GUNS. I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
YOU'RE MISSING THE BIG PICTURE.
I...
I...
GOOD GOD.
MAYBE.
I WOULDN'T COUNT ON IT.

WE HAVE REACHED OUR DESTINATION, GENTLEMEN.
IT WOULD BE RUDE NOT TO FOLLOW THIS MOMENT TO ITS CLIMAX, SEEING AS FATE HAS BROUGHT US HERE.
ENTER THE TOMB PLEASE
I'M NOT SURE THAT'S A TERRIBLY GOOD IDEA. WHATEVER BUILT THAT, I DON'T THINK IT WAS HUMAN.
YOU BOYS SHOULD FEEL RIGHT AT HOME THEN, EH?
OOP! YOU WERE RIGHT BACK TO POINTING THE GUNS.
SO, WHAT'S THE PLAN THEN, PROFESSOR?
HEY, YOU HEAR ME?
"THE BEGINNING AND THE END," MELLBERG SAID
IT'S THE END OF EVERYTHING WE THOUGHT WE KNEW AND THE BEGINNING OF A NEW WORLD.
A NEW HISTORY
AND I DON'T THINK IT'S A TOMB.
WHAT IS IT, THEN?
A GATEHOUSE. IT'S THE FRONT DOOR. IT'S LOCKED AND VON HASSEL HAS THE KEY
A FRONT DOOR?
WHAT'S BEHIND THE FRONT DOOR?
AND WHY'S IT LOCKED?

TO KEEP ME OUT SWEETHEART
IT'S ALWAYS TO KEEP ME OUT
NEVER QUITE WORKS THOUGH
YEAH, BUT SOMETIMES DOORS ARE LOCKED TO KEEP THINGS..
.. INSIDE
WE HAVE COME ALL THIS WAY SEARCHING FOR KNOWLEDGE, MY FRIENDS..

...AND KNOWLEDGE IS WHAT WE HAVE FOUND.
IS THAT?
IT'S A MAP. A MAP OF THE STARS.

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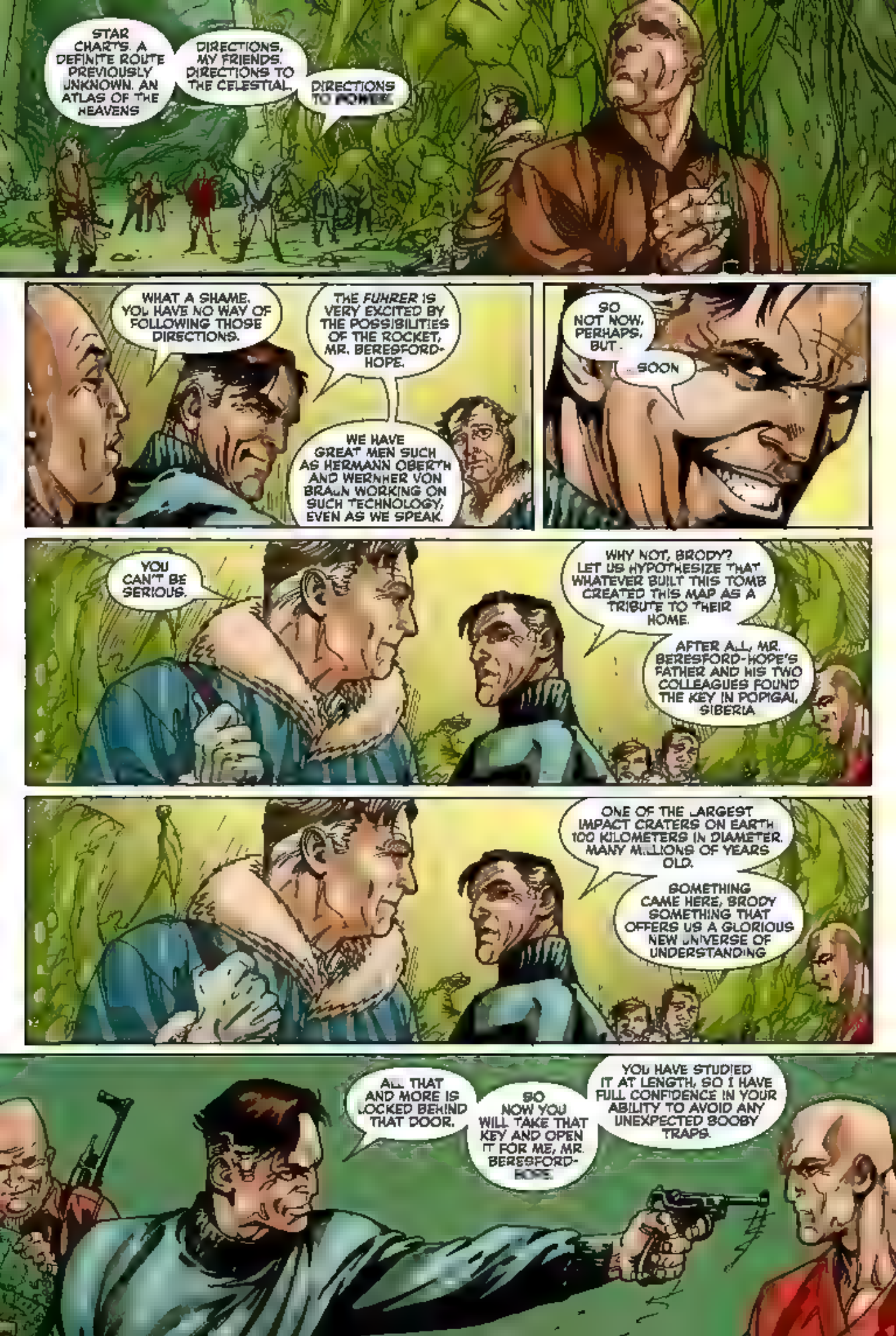
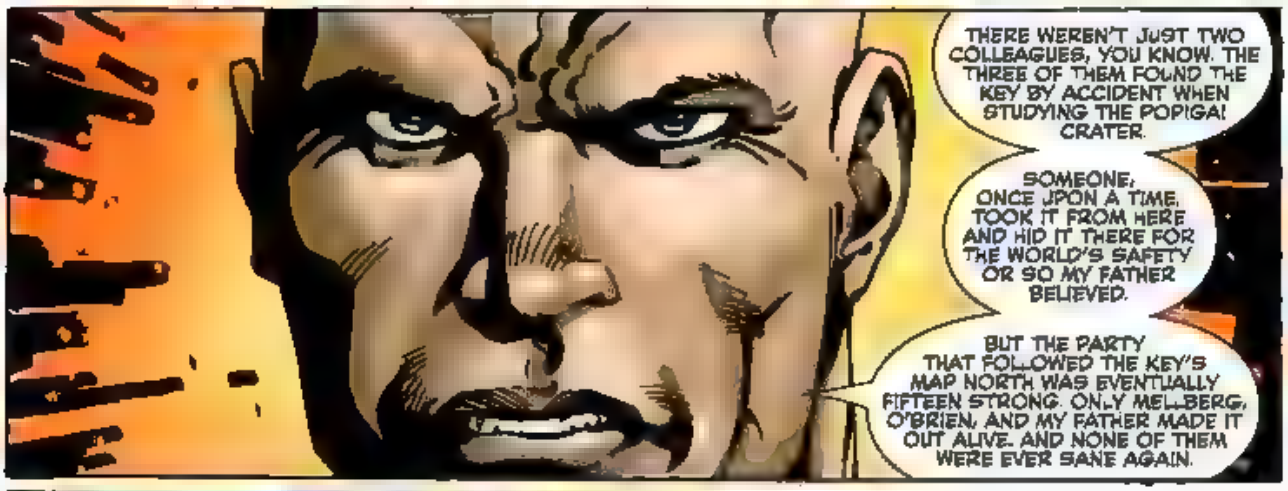
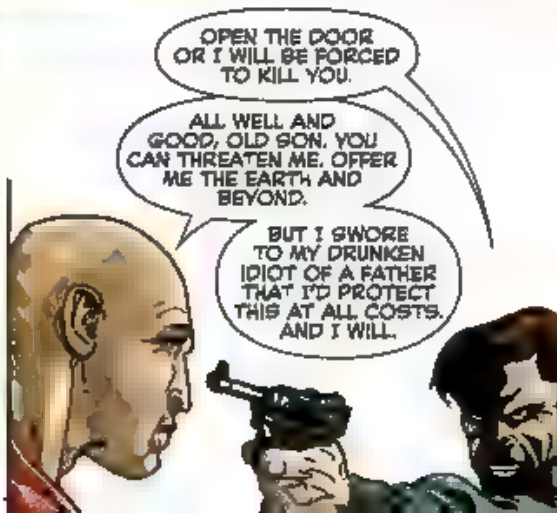

STAR CHARTS. A DEFINITE ROUTE PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN. AN ATLAS OF THE HEAVENS
DIRECTIONS, MY FRIENDS. DIRECTIONS TO THE CELESTIAL.
DIRECTIONS TO POWER.
WHAT A SHAME. YOU HAVE NO WAY OF FOLLOWING THOSE DIRECTIONS.
THE FUHRER IS VERY EXCITED BY THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE ROCKET, MR. BERESFORD-HOPE.
WE HAVE GREAT MEN SUCH AS HERMANN OBERTH AND WERNHER VON BRAUN WORKING ON SUCH TECHNOLOGY, EVEN AS WE SPEAK.
SO NOT NOW, PERHAPS, BUT...
...SOON
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS.
WHY NOT, BRODY? LET US HYPOTHESIZE THAT WHATEVER BUILT THIS TOMB CREATED THIS MAP AS A TRIBUTE TO THEIR HOME.
AFTER ALL, MR. BERESFORD-HOPE'S FATHER AND HIS TWO COLLEAGUES FOUND THE KEY IN POPIGAI, SIBERIA.
ONE OF THE LARGEST IMPACT CRATERS ON EARTH 100 KILOMETERS IN DIAMETER. MANY MILLIONS OF YEARS OLD.
SOMETHING CAME HERE, BRODY SOMETHING THAT OFFERS US A GLORIOUS NEW UNIVERSE OF UNDERSTANDING
ALL THAT AND MORE IS LOCKED BEHIND THAT DOOR.
SO NOW YOU WILL TAKE THAT KEY AND OPEN IT FOR ME, MR. BERESFORD-HOPE.
YOU HAVE STUDIED IT AT LENGTH, SO I HAVE FULL CONFIDENCE IN YOUR ABILITY TO AVOID ANY UNEXPECTED BOOBY TRAPS.

KILL THEM. OPEN THE DOOR.
WHAT?


THERE WEREN'T JUST TWO COLLEAGUES, YOU KNOW. THE THREE OF THEM FOUND THE KEY BY ACCIDENT WHEN STUDYING THE POPIGAI CRATER.
SOMEONE, ONCE UPON A TIME, TOOK IT FROM HERE AND HID IT THERE FOR THE WORLD'S SAFETY OR SO MY FATHER BELIEVED.
BUT THE PARTY THAT FOLLOWED THE KEY'S MAP NORTH WAS EVENTUALLY FIFTEEN STRONG. ONLY MELLBERG, O'BRIEN, AND MY FATHER MADE IT OUT ALIVE. AND NONE OF THEM WERE EVER SANE AGAIN.

"THE DOORWAY PROTECTS ITSELF," WAS ALL MY FATHER WOULD EVER SAY ON THE MATTER
KILL THEM. OPEN THE DOOR.


OPEN THE DOOR OR I WILL BE FORCED TO KILL YOU.
ALL WELL AND GOOD, OLD SON. YOU CAN THREATEN ME. OFFER ME THE EARTH AND BEYOND.
BUT I SWORE TO MY DRUNKEN IDIOT OF A FATHER THAT I'D PROTECT THIS AT ALL COSTS. AND I WILL.

KNOWLEDGE FOR ITS OWN WONDER IS SOMETHING CLOSE TO HEAVEN, I THINK. KNOWLEDGE FOR THE PURSUIT OF POWER AND GLORY, HOWEVER? THAT IS THE ROAD TO HELL.
SO YOU AND YOUR FÜHRER CAN BUGGER OFF.
I'M NOT DOING IT
SHOULDN'T WE DO SOMETH.—
WAIT
HE'LL OPEN IT
COME ON, ALEX. YOU SAID YOURSELF HOW DESPERATE YOU ARE TO KNOW WHAT'S INSIDE.
OPEN IT
YOU HAVE MADE YOUR POINT CLEARLY, MR. BERESFORD-HOPE. YOUR STAND AND FORCE OF WILL ARE ADMIRABLE.
I CAN SEE THAT THERE IS NO POINT ARGUING WITH YOU.
SLINK!

BUT IT MEANS YOU ARE NO MORE USE TO ME, I'M AFRAID.
NO.
NOW THEN, BRODY WOULD YOU CARE TO OPEN THE DOOR IN HIS PLACE, PERHAPS?
I SHALL GIVE YOU TEN SECONDS TO...
DECIDE.
WHAT IS THIS?
KILL THEM.
KILL THEM.
BLOOD-BLOOD-BLOOD-BLOOD!

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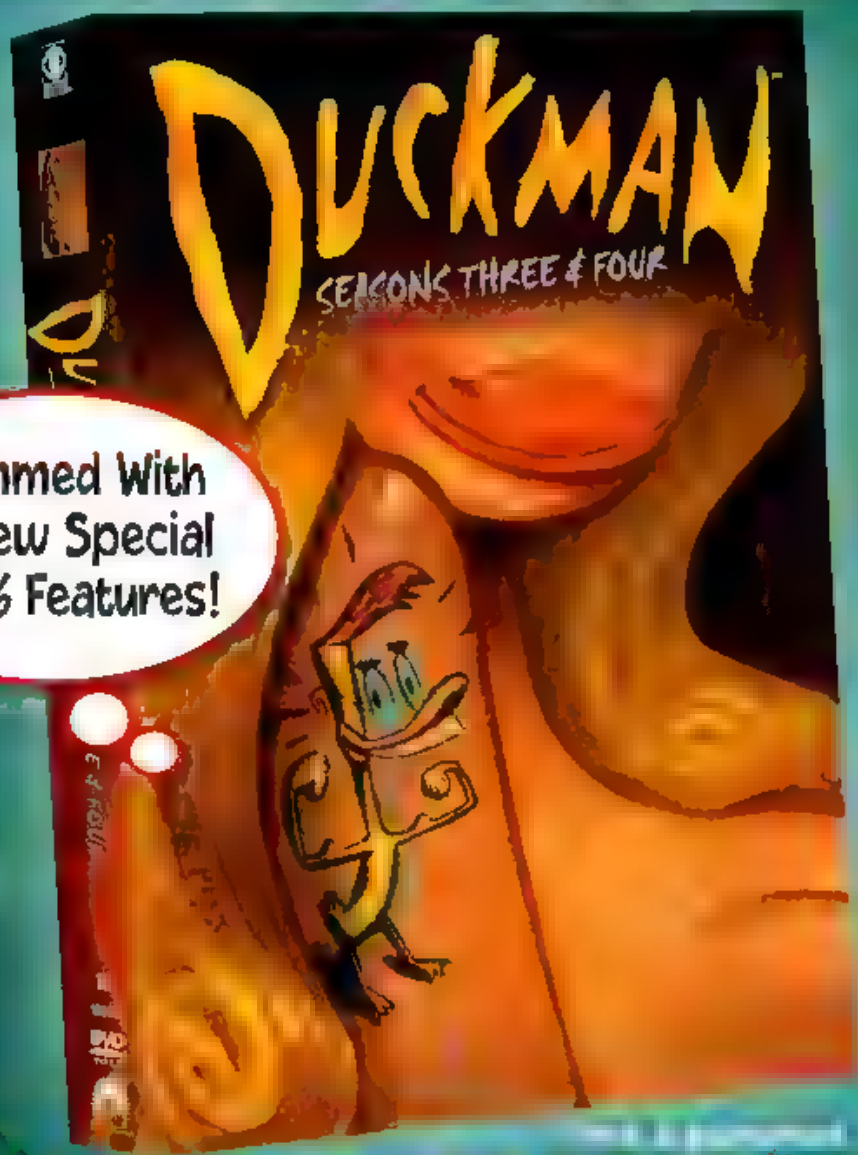

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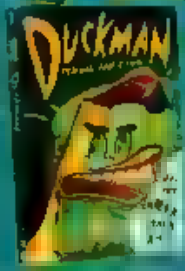

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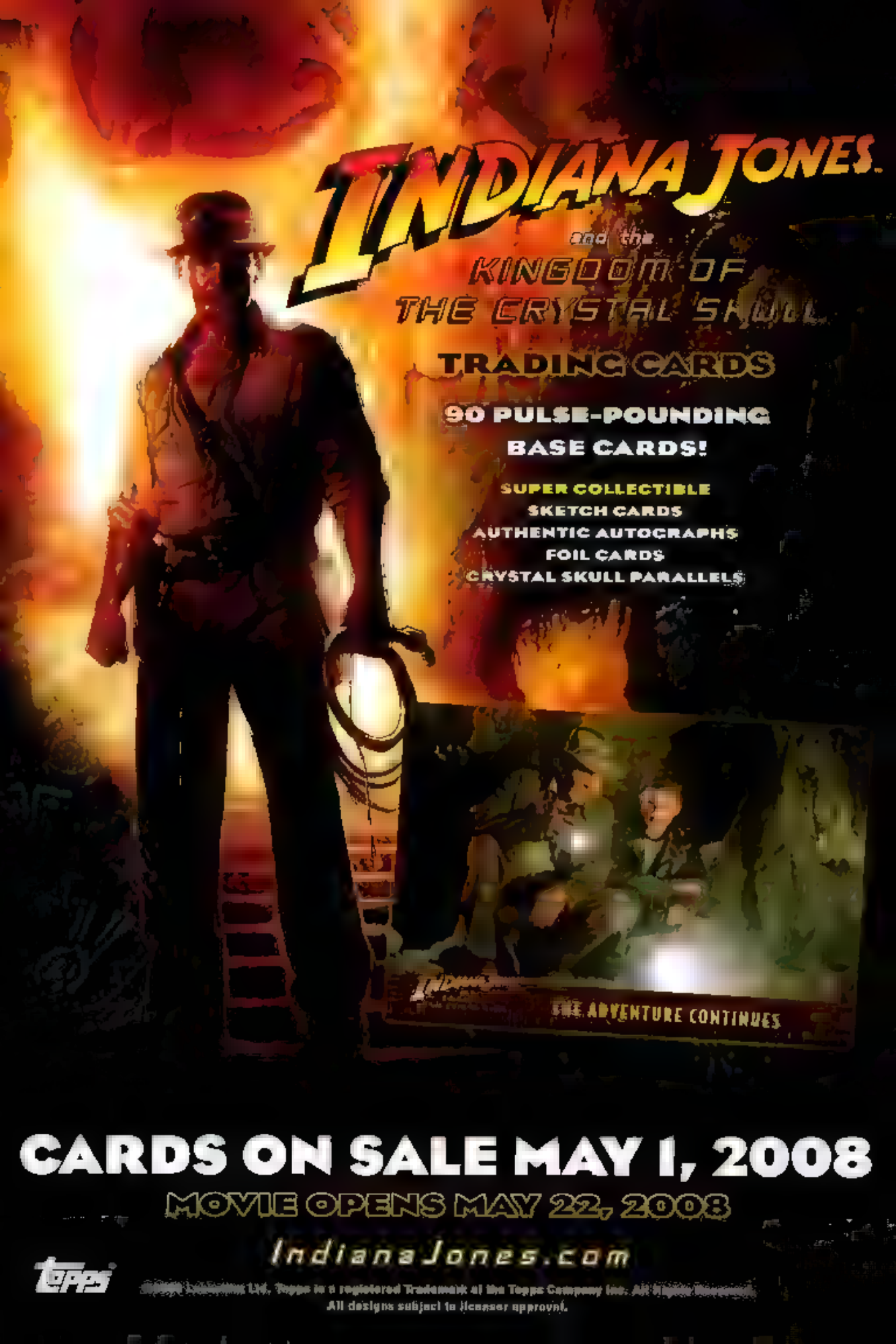
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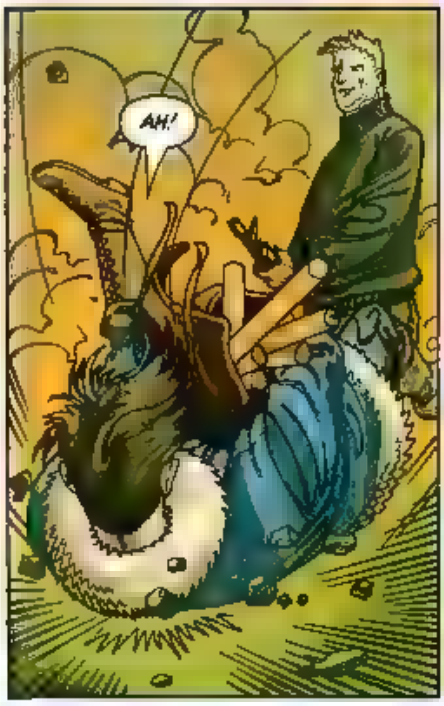
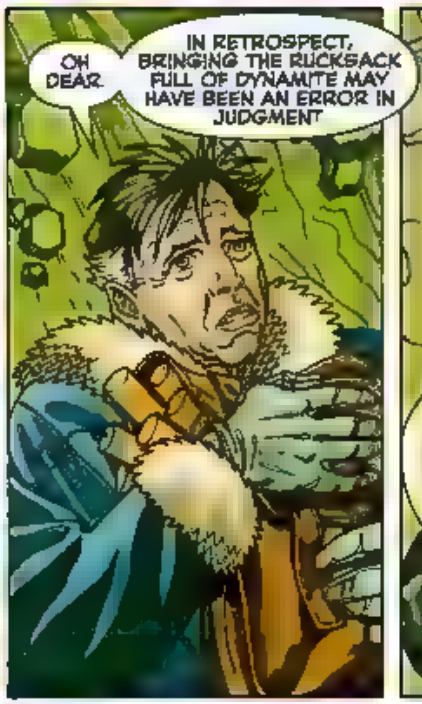

AH!


OH DEAR.
IN RETROSPECT, BRINGING THE RUCKSACK FULL OF DYNAMITE MAY HAVE BEEN AN ERROR IN JUDGMENT

KILL THEM.

HEY!

THUNK!
THWWWIPPP!
C'MERE!
CRRRRACK!

MARCUS, I'M SORRY YOU WERE RIGHT, WHAT YOU SAID BACK 'N SHANGHAI I WANTED IT TOO MUCH. WE DON'T WRITE HISTORY.
THERE'LL BE TIME FOR THAT LATER, INDY
OR PERHAPS NOT
KILL THEM. OPEN THE..
SO, FELLAS..
I GET ONE OF THE LUXURY CABINS ON THE WAY HOME FOR THIS, OR WHAT?

WHAT IN THE WORLD WAS THAT?
SOMETH NG NASTY, MARCUS
RUUUUUUUUUMBLE!
"SOMETHING VERY NASTY."
DID YOU HEAR THAT? THAT MOST HEAVENLY OF SOUNDS? IT IS THE SOUND OF A BIRTH. THE BIRTH OF A NEW WORLD.
IT IS THE SAME SOUND THAT THE FÜHRER HIMSELF WILL HEAR. TRY TO STOP ME IF YOU MUST BUT I HAVE ALREADY SENT BACK THESE COORDINATES FROM THE SHIP.
OTHERS ARE COMING.

KNOWLEDGE IS OUR WORLD, JONES. IT IS WHAT THE LIKES OF YOU AND I SEEK OUT BEFORE WE TAKE BREATH EACH DAY.
FOR US THIS MOMENT IS AKIN TO EPIPHANY. AN ANCIENT WORLD PREVIOUSLY UNDISCOVERED FOR US TO EXPLORE.
THE MONOTONY OF REPEATED EXPERIENCE GONE, REPLACED BY THE ANGELIC, AWAKENING TOUCH OF THE NEW.
HISTORY ALIVE!
FOR GOD'S SAKE, MAN! THIS IS EVERYTHING THAT YOU ARE! YOU WANT THIS AS MUCH AS I!
ADMIT IT!
OOOF!
YEAH. YOU'RE RIGHT.
BUT RIGHT NOW THAT DOESN'T MATTER A DAMN. YOU KNOW WHY?
YOU KILLED ALEX!

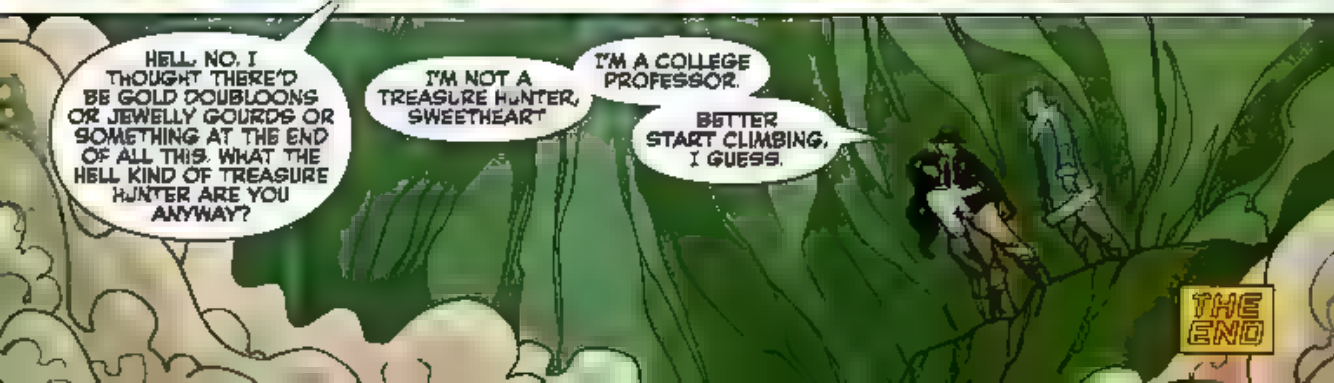
AAAAAAHH!
WON'T BE MUCH LEFT FOR YOUR FÜHRER TO SEE WHEN HE GET'S HERE, I'M AFRAID.

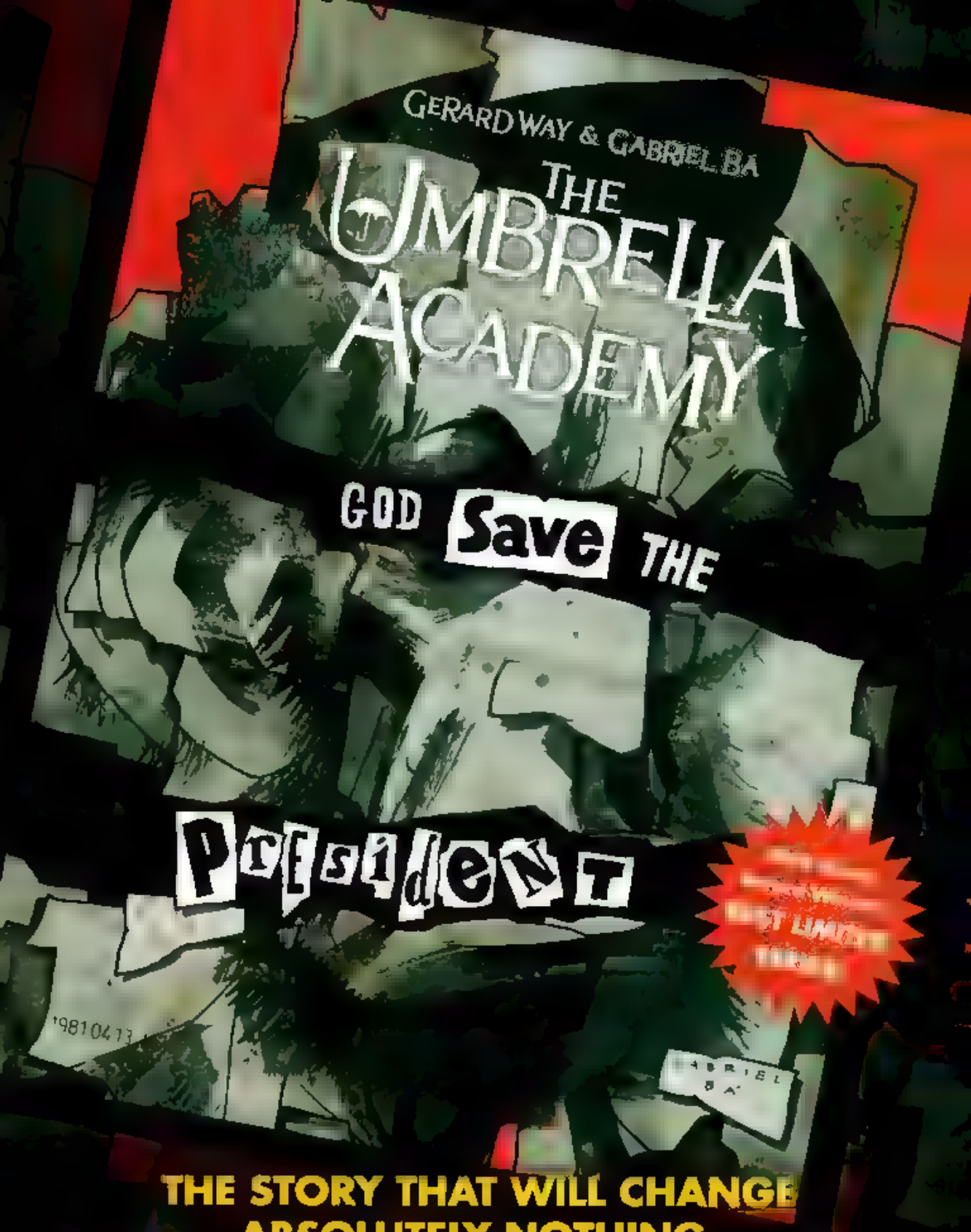
RUN!
THAT'S HARDLY AN AMMUNITION DUMP, INDY I NEEDN'T THINK WE...
WE'RE UNDERGROUND, MARCUS!
OH YES, I FORGOT
NO, NO, NO, NO, NO
FFFFFFFFFF!
BOOOOOOOOM!

RRRRRUUMMBLE
3.0

KNOWLEDGE BRINGS US CLOSER TO GOD.
ALTHOUGH WHAT GOD THAT IS CAN OCCASIONALLY BE A PROBLEM, ADMITTEDLY.
YOU DID THE RIGHT THING, INDY

REALLY?
YEAH, JONES. EVEN I WAS IMPRESSED.


HELL, NO. I THOUGHT THERE'D BE GOLD DOUBLOONS OR JEWELLY GOURDS OR SOMETHING AT THE END OF ALL THIS. WHAT THE HELL KIND OF TREASURE HUNTER ARE YOU ANYWAY?
I'M NOT A TREASURE HUNTER, SWEETHEART
I'M A COLLEGE PROFESSOR.
BETTER START CLIMBING, I GUESS.
THE END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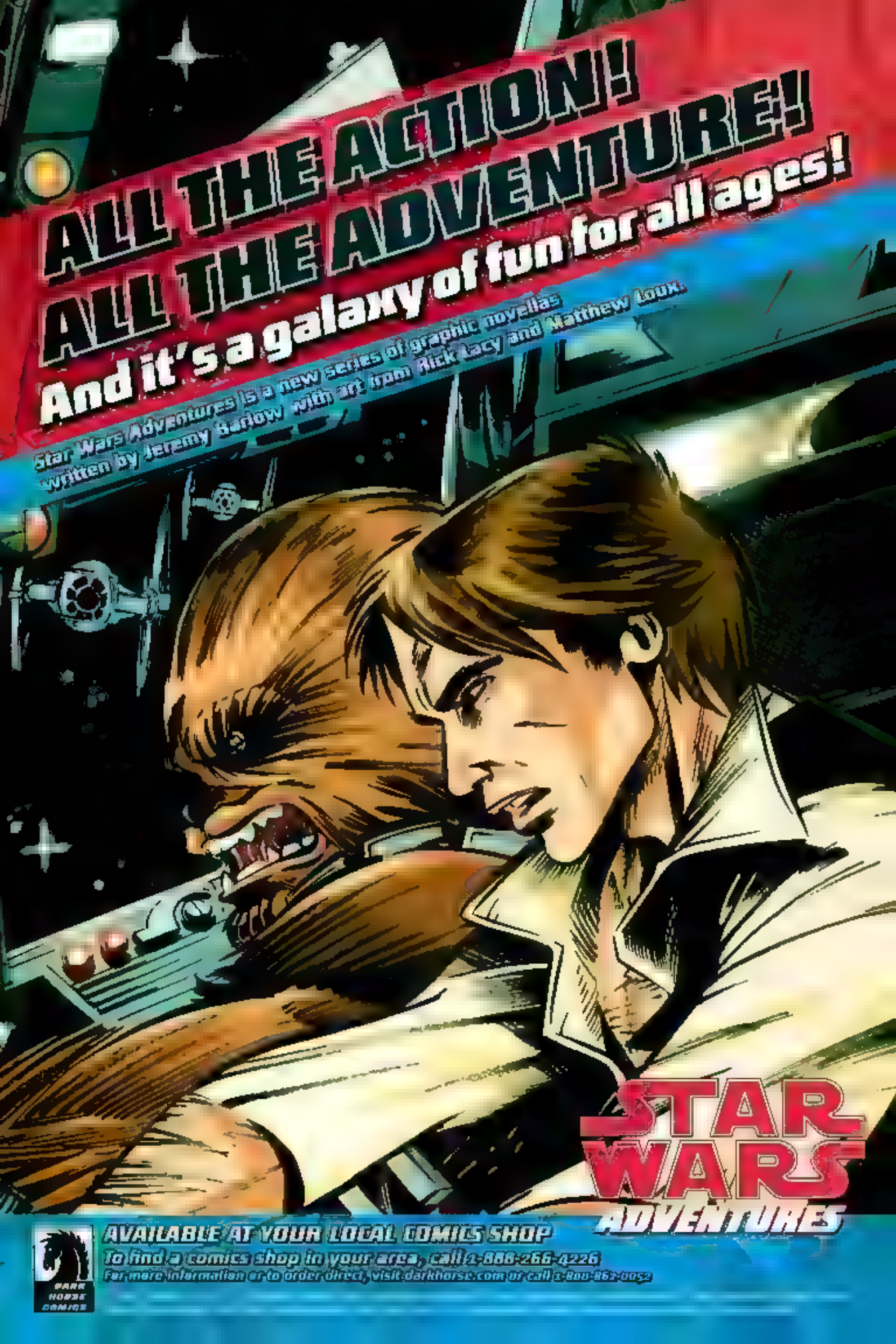
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MARCH 2009

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST WEBCOMIC? I'M SURE YOU REMEMBER.

Mine was Charley Parker's *Argon Zark!* in the midnineties. It took forever to load on my parents' dial-up connection, but even so I tore through that strip's archive as fast as I could. It blew my mind—*comics! On the Internet!*—and new pages couldn't come fast enough. I was hungry for more, but it seemed that *Argon Zark!* was the only site of its kind. (In actual fact there were six. Remember the years before Google, when we had to walk uphill to the Internet in the snow, both ways?)

Flash forward thirteen years and there's an embarrassment of e-riches. Newspapers may be fading, with their funnies section the long-suffering canary in the mine, but it's become clear that our culture has developed a curious *need* for comic strips. Thewebcomiclist.com currently counts over *twelve thousand* webcomics. Twelve freaking *thousand.*

But where do you start? When you have so many options, how do you know which ones are worth your time?

Well, Dear Reader, we professional nerds at Dark Horse have been scouring the Internets *for* you, seeking out the proverbial *crème de la crème.* After kicking things off with cult hits *Megatokyo* and *Penny Arcade,* we relaunched our flagship anthology *Dark Horse Presents* as a MySpace monthly and made big waves last year with *The Perry Bible Fellowship, Achewood,* and *Wondermark*—and all three of which, by the way, will have second volumes out this spring.

"Okay," I hear you thinking, "but what's *new?*"

How about *Star Wars*—that do anything for you? To celebrate ***Star Wars: The Old Republic,*** BioWare and LucasArts' hugely anticipated MMORPG (that's "massively multiplayer online role-playing game," for you luddites), we've teamed up with one of the game's writers, **Rob Chestney,** and *BtVS: Tales of the Vampires* alum **Alex Sanchez** to present a biweekly webcomic at **swtor.com.** If you've had a hankering for lightsaber battles and space opera—and really, who hasn't?—fire up your computer and check it out!

"Cool," you think, "a *Star Wars* muh-more-pa-guh. I . . . hey *waitaminute, Star Wars* has been around since the '70s! What's *new*-new?"

Well, first up is ***Applegeeks,*** artist **Mohammad F. Haque** and writer **Ananth Panagariya's** long-running misadventures of four college students. Hawk, Jayce, Alice, and Gina already have their hands full trying to fit their madcap antics around schoolwork—they seem to spend more time in *trouble* than in class—but when Hawk decides to build a robot girlfriend, all bets are off! This strip charms even the hardest of geek hearts, so look for volume one in late May.

Hot on its heels is the book I'm most excited about this year: ***Sinfest.*** That's right—the immensely popular strip from international man of mystery **Tatsuya Ishida** is headed to print, and I can't wait. Drawing on classic comic-strip influences yet touching on such topics as religion, advertising, sex, and politics, *Sinfest* is the best newspaper-style strip you'll never see in a newspaper—"the best webcomic out there," according to comicsworthreading.com. We're starting at the beginning with volume one in June, and catch an exclusive ***MySpace DHP*** appearance in May!

Stay tuned for further webcomics news in '09 from the Horse of Darkness. It's a brave new world out there, and we're paying attention.

See you online,

Moody

Katie Moody
Associate Editor

DARK HORSE HEROES

Artist and comics collector **Jesse Hamm** has dabbled in comics art with his graphic novel, *Good As Lily,* but he primarily works on book and magazine illustration. His collecting hobby helped DH to make our *Tarzan: The Jesse Marsh Years* archives possible with a comic-collection loan—we were extra careful!

Charles Brownstein, executive director at the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, loves comics—he's a lifer, and believes that comics have a capacity for creativity that's unmatched in other mediums . . . Which is awesome, since he manages pretty much everything at CBLDF, making it possible to defend free speech in comics.

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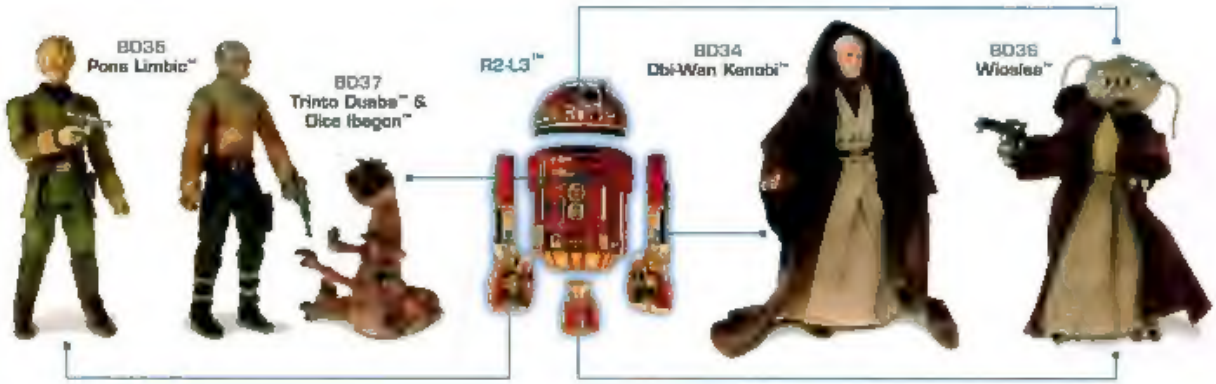

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